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Summary record of the 43rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 14 December 1998, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Abelian ..... (Armenia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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98-83732 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 123: Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission and the United Nations Observer Mission In Angola (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.19)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.19

1. **The Chairman** introduced draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.19.

2. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.19 was adopted.*

Agenda item 117: Pattern of conferences (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.24)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.24

3. **Ms. Achouri** (Tunisia), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.24, drew the Committee's attention to section A, paragraphs 30 and 31. It was the understanding of the Committee that the reports requested would be issued as updated versions and that they would include data covering the relevant period.

4. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.24 was adopted.*

5. **Mr. Farid** (Saudi Arabia), speaking in explanation of position, asked that the names of staff members with an academic background and previous experience in cost accounting should be provided by the second part of the resumed session.

6. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that compliance with the letter and spirit of the draft resolution was important; it should improve the work of both the Fifth Committee and the other Main Committees. He appealed to the Secretariat to address the chronic problem of the submission and issuance of documentation to help the Fifth Committee in its decision-making process, which had an impact on the work of the Organization as a whole.

7. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the issue of conference services was of great importance. It was regrettable that several months of informal consultations had been required to arrive at the draft resolution, particularly since many of the concerns raised in informal consultations had been addressed in the report of the Committee on Conferences. It was unfortunate that the Committee had benefited so little from the recommendations of the Committee on Conferences.

8. **Mr. Jaremczuk** (Poland) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

9. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) reiterated his delegation's earlier proposal, which had not met with approval in informal consultations, that the Procurement Manual should be issued in all six official languages so that all Member States could benefit from procurement by the Organization.

Agenda item 114: Programme planning (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.18)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.18

10. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.18, drew attention to paragraphs 1 and 2 which commended the good work performed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

11. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.18 was adopted.*

12. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of position, said that the European Union had continually stressed that attention must be paid to all phases of the planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation cycle, and that all the phases should be linked so as to address the Organization's objectives, strategy and future challenges in the most effective and efficient manner. Ideally there should be much closer links between planning and budgeting to allow for enhanced accountability within the Secretariat. Evaluation was instrumental in attaining that goal.

13. It was regrettable that the Secretary-General's report on programme performance and coordination had been of a rather descriptive nature and had not provided Member States with sufficient analytical information on all programmes for input into the other stages of the planning and budgeting cycle. In response to that concern, Member States had revised the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation accordingly, so that programme narratives would indicate subprogrammes and outputs, objectives and expected accomplishments during the biennium. The revised Regulations and Rules should be vigorously implemented in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001. That would allow Member States to evaluate an individual programme both on its own merits and in the context of the main programmes of the Organization.

14. **Mr. Jaremczuk** (Poland) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

15. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the balance reflected in the draft resolution should help to guide the Organization in

programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation. The Group of 77 and China fully supported the continued setting of priorities in the medium-term plan, the Organization's principal policy directive; that would guide the allocation of resources in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/213. He welcomed the fact that the priorities set forth in the budget outline were in conformity with those contained in the medium-term plan.

16. **Ms. Buergo-Rodriguez** (Cuba) said that her delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It had joined the consensus on the draft resolution on the understanding that all recommendations on results-based budgeting contained in the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination would be implemented only after action by the General Assembly, based on recommendations from the Committee.

Agenda Item 119: Human resources management (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.26)

Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.26

17. **Mr. Armitage** (Australia), introducing draft decision A/C.5/53/L.26, said that disappointment had been expressed in informal consultations that the various issues arising under the item had not been considered substantively in what was supposed to be a personnel year.

18. *Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.26 was adopted.*

19. **Ms. Butschek** (Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of position, said that the European Union attached great importance to human resources management, and regretted that in what was supposed to be a personnel year the Committee had not been able to begin its consideration of the item until mid-November owing to a lack of documentation. Since insufficient time had been left for a meaningful discussion, the European Union had advocated deferral of the item to the first part of the resumed session.

20. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said he regretted that it had proved necessary to defer consideration of such a very important item. The Group had reluctantly joined the consensus because the Fifth Committee had been unable to begin its consideration of the item earlier in the session. He appealed for ample time to be made available to allow the Committee to finalize its work during the first part of the resumed session.

21. **Mr. Yamagiwa** (Japan) said that his delegation, too, regretted that the Committee had been unable to consider the item, since it was intended to be the main item on its agenda for the current session. The Committee must take steps to avoid a recurrence of such a situation in the future. The issue of timely documentation should also be addressed.

22. With regard to subparagraph (b) of the draft decision, it was his delegation's understanding that the paragraph conveyed the message to the Secretary-General that, until the Committee had taken a decision on the matter, the judgement of the Administrative Tribunal should not be applied to any other case but the one which it had reviewed.

23. **Mr. Jaremczuk** (Poland) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

24. **Mr. Saha** (India) said that his delegation associated itself with all the previous speakers and looked forward to giving the item priority consideration at the resumed session.

Agenda item 113: Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.25

25. **Ms. Brennen-Haylock** (Bahamas), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.25 on conditions of service and compensation for officials other than Secretariat officials: members of the International Court of Justice and judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, said that, if the draft resolution was adopted, changes would be made in the conditions of service for members of the International Court of Justice and judges of the international criminal tribunals. The intention of paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft resolution was to regularize their conditions of service.

26. **Mr. Bond** (United States of America) said that his delegation appreciated the importance of the International Court of Justice and the need to attract the best possible jurists to its challenging work. It had therefore supported the substantial increase in salaries proposed by ACABQ, but had envisioned that it would be coupled with a more moderate increase in pensions. His delegation remained concerned about the proposed pension increase, particularly because it was to be in addition to a very generous salary increase. A pension of one half of salary after nine years of service was, in its view, excessive. A pension of one third of salary after nine years of service was generous, particularly since judges were not required to contribute, there was no minimum age requirement, and provision was made for a surviving spouse's benefit. His delegation had proposed, and would have supported, a compromise that judges should receive one third of their salary after nine years of service

and up to two thirds of their salary if they completed a second full term. Since that proposal could not be accommodated, his delegation must disassociate itself from the consensus.

27. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.25 was adopted.*

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.66 concerning agenda item 45 (*continued*) (A/53/734; A/C.5/53/45)

28. **The Chairman** drew attention to the statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/53/L.66 on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (A/C.5/53/45) and the related report of ACABQ (A/53/734). The replies from the Secretariat to questions raised at the Committee's 42nd meeting had been distributed.

29. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that, after a detailed examination of the reports, his delegation had some additional comments to make. In paragraph 16 of its report (A/53/734), the Advisory Committee recommended a 10 per cent reduction in the budgetary allocation proposed by the Secretary-General. As a matter of principle, his delegation did not subscribe to an across-the-board reduction without first analysing its implications. The allocation for "hazard pay" proposed by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/53/45, annex I) was not included in the 1998 budget; that proposal therefore needed to be clarified and justified. Moreover, although the total number of military observers was being reduced from five to four, an increase had been proposed in their travel costs; that increase also needed to be clarified and justified. Similarly, an increase from $72,000 to $296,000 — an increase of over 400 per cent — had been proposed in the travel costs of civilian staff in 1999 (annex I), and annex IV showed an excess spending on civilian staff travel in 1998. Those increases, too, should be explained and justified.

30. The proposed increase for the procurement of furniture and equipment in 1999 was about 900 per cent of the appropriation for 1998 and expenditure incurred under that item of the account in 1998 had been 250 per cent higher than the amount appropriated; detailed clarifications were needed in that area.

31. A provision had also been made for the travel of "political groups" to attend consultation meetings in Afghanistan (annex III. B, para. 6). In that connection, his delegation would like to know, first, the definition of "political groups"; second, whether such an activity had been mandated by the General Assembly; and third, what would be the estimated amount to be spent on such visits.

32. An explanation was also needed of the mission-specific cost parameters for the mission subsistence allowance and the daily subsistence allowance for the level of Assistant Secretary-General and above (annex III). His delegation also had questions regarding the increase in the number of international staff shown in annex III and the costs listed for certain items of equipment and computers.

33. He noted that the investigations requested in paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 52/211 B had not been carried out. Since voluntary contributions had not been forthcoming as expected, the Secretariat should state the reasons for not budgeting the required expenditure to carry out that very important mandated activity.

34. Lastly, he noted that $61,700 had been spent for the preparation of a report by the Special Rapporteur, who had visited neither Afghanistan nor Pakistan because of the so-called security situation, and asked for a clarification.

35. **The Chairman** said that the matter would be referred to informal consultations and he would ask the Secretariat to provide the requested clarification and information. He appealed to all delegations to conduct their work in the spirit of rule 153 of the rules of procedure.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.

United Nations A/C.5/53/SR.44

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

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Summary record of the 44th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 15 December 1998, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Abelian ..... (Armenia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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98-83739 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 113: Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 (*continued*)

Revised estimates for the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (A/C.5/53/47)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Budget Division) introduced the revised estimates for the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (A/C.5/53/47), which were submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to a decision by the Security Council, conveyed to him in a letter dated 11 December 1998, agreeing with his proposal to extend the mandate of the Office until December 1999. The sum of $1,543,600 gross ($1,395,300 net) was requested to provide for the Office, which would have five international staff and four support staff.

2. The Office had been established after the Secretary-General had received a letter dated 15 June 1998 from the President of the Security Council. Related provisions for 1998 were being reviewed in the context of the first performance report. The commitment entered into for 1998 had been made under the provisions for unforeseen and extraordinary expenses by drawing on the Working Capital Fund.

3. The request related solely to the calendar year 1999. Detailed provisions with regard to its components were shown in the annex to the document.

4. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville had been established on 1 July 1998 with the agreement of the Security Council. Paragraph 4 of the report of the Secretary-General gave details of the resources allocated for 1998. The Security Council had agreed to an extension of the Office's mandate until 31 December 1999 and the Secretary-General had estimated the related cost at $1,395,300 for nine temporary posts and the operational activities connected with the Office. The Advisory Committee agreed with the request of the Secretary-General as set out in paragraphs 8 and 9 and with the procedures set out in paragraph 10 of his report.

5. **The Chairman** suggested that the Fifth Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of the report of the estimate of $1,395,300 under section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999, and $148,300 under section 32, Staff assessment, on the understanding that such additional appropriations as might be necessary would be dealt with outside the procedures related to the contingency fund, as provided for in annex I, paragraph 11, of General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986.

6. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 118: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.21

7. **Mr. Smyth** (Ireland) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.21 submitted by the Chairman following informal consultations. He urged its adoption by consensus.

8. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.21 was adopted.*

9. **Mr. Bond** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of position, said that his delegation was seriously concerned that, once again, the Committee had failed to acknowledge the existence of any scale of assessments dealing with peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping assessments comprised an integral part of Articles 17 and 19 of the Charter, two Articles which were referred to liberally in the draft resolution as fundamental to the continued viability of the Organization. After some 25 years, peacekeeping assessments continued to be rendered on an ad hoc basis. There was still no movement to establish a permanent or formal scale for such assessments, even though they comprised a substantial part of contributions and the majority of the arrears of Member States.

10. It was incumbent on the Committee on Contributions to begin to examine those issues. His delegation remained perplexed that the draft resolution not only failed to acknowledge the principal role of that Committee but also sidestepped the entire issue of assessments relating to peacekeeping operations.

11. The issue of the scale of assessments would be considered again at the resumed fifty-third session when the question of exemptions for several Member States under Article 19 of the Charter would be reviewed. He urged members of the Committee to reflect further on the issue of peacekeeping assessments and the constructive technical role that should be played by the Committee on Contributions.

12. **Mr. Herrerra** (Mexico) said that the draft resolution reflected a delicate balance which incorporated all the elements of the question.

13. **Mr. Armitage** (Australia) said that, although his delegation had joined the consensus, it had been disappointed that the draft resolution adopted was procedural

in nature. The Committee had missed an opportunity to provide feedback to the Committee on Contributions regarding the application of Article 19 of the Charter. His delegation attached importance to the request that the Committee on Contributions should look into other measures to encourage the timely, full and unconditional payment of assessed contributions. Various proposals had been discussed over the years from a political standpoint, and there would be some value in requesting the technical opinion of the Committee on Contributions on the matter.

14. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, while he recognized that the issue of the scale of assessments was a complex and sensitive one, he was surprised that the Committee had spent so many hours discussing it when 1998 was not a scale year.

15. Although the Group of 77 and China had joined the consensus on the draft resolution, it was not without great disappointment. It was very concerned with the spirit in which the draft resolution had been negotiated and strongly believed that mistrust and doubt should be avoided. It held to the longstanding view that it was irrelevant to link discussion on that agenda item with the special scale for peacekeeping budgets. It was also of the view that the Committee on Contributions did not have a mandate to discuss the special scale for peacekeeping budgets, as stated in paragraph 93 of the report of the Committee on Contributions (A/53/11). The Group of 77 and China would continue to be guided by the Ministerial Declaration of the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

16. **Mr. Watanabe** (Japan) said his delegation was pleased that the General Assembly was being requested to take note of the new role of the Committee on Contributions.

17. **Mr. Zhang Wanhai** (China) said that, in the past, the Organization had not acted in accordance with rule 160 of the rules of procedure and the views of the Committee on Contributions and an unjust approach had been taken towards the scale of assessments. His delegation hoped that exemptions under Article 19 of the Charter could be dealt with appropriately in the future.

18. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the understanding that section D, paragraph 2, included the Observer delegation of Palestine.

19. **Mrs. Aragon** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The draft resolution just adopted represented a balance of the interests of all delegations. In section A, ASEAN was pleased to note the reaffirmation of the legal obligation of Member States to bear the expenses of the United Nations as apportioned by the General Assembly. It urged all Member States, in particular the major contributor, to pay their assessed dues in full, on time and without conditions.

20. ASEAN looked forward to the results of the review of the Committee on Contributions on the elements of the scale methodology, the application of Article 19 of the Charter and measures that would encourage the timely, full and unconditional payment of assessed contributions.

21. With regard to requests under exemption from Article 19, ASEAN joined in the reaffirmation of the role of the General Assembly, as well as the advisory role of the Committee on Contributions. The General Assembly should be able to benefit from the technical advice of that Committee when considering those requests, and ASEAN looked forward to its recommendations on the modalities for dealing with such requests when the Committee on Contributions was not in session.

22. With regard to the scale of assessments for peacekeeping, ASEAN supported the position of the Group of 77 and China that the principles and guidelines in resolutions 1874 (S-IV) and 3101 (XXVIII) should be institutionalized and adopted on a permanent basis. It further supported the position of that Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that no member of that Movement or other developing country should be classified in a category higher than group C.

23. **Mr. Bay** (Singapore) said that the scale of assessments was a politically sensitive issue. It had never been perfect and equitable and had never been meant to be so. His delegation agreed that peacekeeping scales of assessments should not be discussed under the current agenda item.

24. **Mr. Greiver** (Uruguay) requested the Committee to take due note of the statements made on behalf of the member countries of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) at the beginning of the current session.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.